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Media Penetration and Cultural Consequences on Adolescents in Malaysia

Introduction

The Malaysian media landscape of the 1990's is an on going and ever growing scenario of transformations in the ownership, structure, production, distribution process and content. The evolving internationalization of the media industry, the economic booming years of the mid-1980's and the timely government shift in media policy from one of state controlled to privatization have contributed toward the growth of the local media industry. Today, the landscape boasts of an environment of both commercial and government owned print and electronic media of local and imported content and, a lifestyle of electronic recreational media, personal computers and cybercafés.

Local policy makers, political leaders and community members have always been concerned about the long term consequences of media content and usage on the younger members of the populace. It is a commonly held view that high media penetration may produce behavior that are deemed alien, anti- or, even contradictory to local norms and values. Although the local media can be seen as an instrumental subsystem that purports the government's policies within the larger social system and have the potential to exert a considerable influence over the values, norms and lifestyle of the local populace, the impending global communication processes should not be taken lightly.

This brings forth the issue of the role of media and in particular television in the articulation, creation and sustenance of local societal processes, values and norms. Several studies

of media effects based on social learning and arousal theories have provided evidence that links television contents to particular behavior subsequent to exposure. These studies have speculated on the effects of television viewing on attitudes, values, personality and perception (Bower, 1973; Greenfield and Beagles-Roos, 1988; Peiser, 1999). Subsequent theories on uses and effects have contested that young people are not passive but active users of television images. Television messages and images are not absorbed and modeled as readily as previously assumed but rather that there is an active process of interpretation, critical evaluation and selection (Clifford, Gunter and McAleer, 1995; Collins, 1982). In addition, factors such as gender, cognitive development, personality characteristics and age contribute, mitigate or enhance the effects of television on young people (Gunter, 1985; Clifford, et.al, 1991; Rubin, 1994). On the other hand, cultivation analysis is primarily concerned with the array of cultural perceptions and beliefs portrayed in the mass media (in particular television) lends a workable framework to gauge the consequences of media penetration on value orientations among adolescents. Its central proposition states that higher television viewing results in beliefs and perceptions that reflect the television messages and images (Potter, 1990; Gerbner, et.al, 1980).

This paper is concerned with the consequences of the changing media landscape on the adolescents. This matter is given due consideration since young adults between the ages of 13 to 25 will make up 20 percent of the local population by the year 2000. Thus, we explore these concerns by presenting an overview of the mediasation patterns in Malaysia and its relationship to the value orientations common among adolescents between the ages of 13 and 16. It is necessary to examine the spectrum of media penetration while focusing on terrestrial television since it is not the only media activity experienced by these young people. As of the mid-1980's the local media environment has seen the introduction of several media namely, the video cassette recorders, video game sets, satellite television, and personal computers with Internet capabilities that compete for consumption among the adolescents. Hence, a look at television within the array of the other media activities will reveal an insight into the everyday living practices of the local adolescents.

The Malaysian media landscape

It is undeniable that the experiences of the media industry in Malaysia throughout the 1960's and 1990's revealed a close relationship with the development objectives and the subsequent social transformation of the Malaysian society. Inevitably, this interconnectedness further revealed that the media ownership, usage, types and contents are enmeshed in forms of ideology be it local or of foreign origin. By this, it means that whoever has access and control over the output and consumption of media has the potential to shape our culture and cultural identities as reflected by the growing tendencies of the both the local and international media.

The development of the media industry in Malaysia can be divided into two phases: the early years prior to the economic boom of the mid-1980's and the post- economic boom years of the 1990's. Hence, in the early years the media can be seen as a salient and influential subsystem within the larger social system of the society. And since the media provides information of all modes throughout the society, they naturally exert a considerable influence over the values, norms and lifestyle of the local populace. Thus, the local media enacted its agenda-setting function and within its prescribed role of purporting the government's policies on economic development and restructuring of society, the media played a significant role in national development. It was mobilized as part of the government machinery and utilized towards attaining the objectives of the various policies.

Initially, the electronic media that is radio and television broadcasting was solely owned by the government and adhered to the needs of government agencies and politicians. They functioned as an arm of the Ministry of Information and aired programmes on current affairs and the further advancements of desired social goals. However, this does not mean that the public's needs for information and entertainment was neglected. It was just that the electronic media echoed and projected the interests and concerns of the dominant group (Tichenor, et al., 1973).

In contrast, the print media were privately owned by several groups that represented the interest of the various ethnic communities. The ownership based on ethnicity reflected the diversity in content, organization and interests.

Hence, this interesting mix of ethnic ownership allowed for the flourishing of the print media industry in various languages including, English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil. Nevertheless, these printed media in the form of dailies and magazines were circumscribed within the operating rules provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Their publications must not collide with any of the existing laws on printed materials that were enacted so as to safeguard the national interests (Idid and Latiffah, 1989). As such, from the experiences of the media industry in Malaysia throughout the 1960's and 1980's the media ownership, usage, types and images are enmeshed in forms of ideology be it local or of foreign origin.

The development of the media industry in Malaysia in the 1990's is reflective of the economic development and the social transformation that have occurred within the Malaysian society in general. Furthermore, one cannot discount the effects of the prevailing trends in the global communication industry. The Malaysian vision to become an industrialised country and its active participation in international forums has somewhat influenced the development of the media industry especially those in broadcasting and information technology. In order to be effective in putting across Malaysia's position and views on international issues, there need to be adequate communication channels to fulfil this objective. In retrospect, to be a global player either in the economic or political sphere, Malaysia feels that she should not stand in isolation but rather, abreast with the rest of the world. In other words, Malaysia must be competitive. Hence, the inception of the Multi-Media Supercorridor (a research and development area on information technology) and the launching of Malaysia's own satellite are part of the overall effort to prepare Malaysia to be an active player in the global arena.

It is worth noting that the growth of the media industry in Malaysia is also facilitated by the privatisation policy. While it is evident that the government has allowed the establishment of several commercial radio and television stations, nevertheless it will not allow such an important institution to go astray without any government say in its management. Other than instituting regulatory controls, the government through its investment arm, *Khazanah Nasional* and through various "friendly" companies has at least a controlling share in the companies that operate the commercial

broadcast stations. Such moves does not mean that the growth of the Malaysian media industry is unhealthy and restrictive. Under the present circumstances where media is still required to play a significant role in national development, such moves should be deemed as necessary measures to safeguard public interest. Thus, the expansion of the media industry is sanctioned but not without prior determination of its role in national development. The 1990s have seen an accelerated growth of the media industry in the field of broadcasting as well as in the print media. In addition, the advancements in communication technology have seen computer-related technologies making inroads into the Malaysian media scene.

The launching of Malaysia East Asia Asian Satellite (MEASAT 1) on January 13, 1996 and subsequently the introduction of the first direct-to-user (DtU) broadcasting services with 22 television channels and 8 radio channels in October 1996 marked a major shift in the communication policy in Malaysia. Prior to the date, broadcasting services are confined only to terrestrial broadcast and the ownership of satellite dishes was strictly prohibited. The *All Asia Radio and Television Company* (ASTRO) which operated the DtU satellite services has instantaneously broaden the choices of television and radio preferences. It is important to acknowledge at this point that the broadcasting services have in the past been a catalyst to national development. Broadcasting services have been in the forefront of various social engineering processes especially in the promotion of the national language, fostering unity, encouraging and changing people's attitude towards development, and various campaigns such as inculcating savings among the indigenous people through government trust funds, etc. These responsibilities have been entrusted to Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) the national station. Prior to the 1990's, RTM has enjoyed the monopoly of broadcasting services and remained true to its status as public broadcasting. As such, it was able to promote "public interest" through programmes that inform, educate and entertain its audience.

The RTM monopoly over broadcasting services especially with regards to television is not without its social costs. As a consequence of its reliance on predominantly local Malay programmes and imported English programmes it has failed to attract audiences who are non-proficient in Malay or English. This segment of the population has instead turned to

video cassette players viewing videos from Hong Kong and Taiwan as their alternative form of entertainment. Primarily for strategic and tactical purposes, the government has given permission for the commissioning of a private television station to provide alternative programming in order to win back that particular segment of the population. The new private station popularly known as TV3 made its debut in June 1984 and created specific time belts for Chinese serials in the evening and late night. The Chinese belt programmes slowly but surely has won back the Chinese audiences and in the process the programmes have also become a hit among the non-Chinese audiences as well. When TV2 that was operated by RTM followed suit with its own Chinese belt programmes, it brought a further decline in video viewership by 1998. However, in spite of a statement by the Minister of Information Dato Mohammad Rahmat (NST, March 2, 1994) that the government would consider carefully the proposals of new television stations based on the current needs and viewing habits of Malaysians, two more private stations, *Metro Vision* and *MEGA TV* were given licences in 1996 to operate commercial stations. Another commercial station *NTV 7* began operation in 1998.

Compared to television, the radio services were commercialised at a later date. Radio Malaysia that is administered by the Ministry of Information operated five national channels catering for different ethnic groups in their vernacular language. In addition, Radio Malaysia operates *Radio Music*, using the National Language and English in its announcements. Radio Malaysia also operates regional stations from each of the 13 state capitals of the federation, known as Radio 3. The first commercial radio station *The Time Highway Radio* was formed very much later in 1993. Subsequently three other commercial radio stations were given licences to operate: *Suara Johor-Best 104* (1994), *Radio Rediffusion* (1995) and *Radio Kenyalang* (1996). As mentioned earlier, ASTRO the operator of satellite broadcasting came into the scene in October 1996 providing 8 radio channels.

Ownership of personal computers (PCs) and access to Internet is yet another development in the local media scene. In many developed countries such as in the United States the sales of personal computers have superseded that of televisions. In Malaysia, efforts are currently being made to

encourage ownership and accessibility. This is in line with the Government's information technology policy and other efforts such as the Multimedia Super Corridor and paperless bureaucracy in the new federal capital, Putra Jaya. Computer loans are made available to government staffs and rebates for purchasing computers were instituted in the 1996 budget. Access to the Internet has been reported to have risen significantly ever since then. There are presently 500,000 Internet subscribers with an estimated 1.27 million users. It is estimated that 90 per cent of Internet users are those under 39 years of age (Media Guide, 2000).

An overview of the local media landscape would be incomplete without including a discussion of video arcades and cyber cafes. In the mid-1980's when the video game arcades made its debut into the lives of the local populace, it paved the way for electronic recreational media to be part and parcel of the next generation's lifestyle. Inasmuch as they were suppose to be recreational facilities that were an alternative to the traditional recreational outlets, undoubtedly there were many cases of misuse and abuse of those facilities by the local young adults. By the early 1990's the local police force had cracked down on most of the sleazy centers and many were subsequently shut down. Nonetheless, urban young adults still needed recreational facilities other than the traditional. By the mid-1990's, a hybrid form of the video arcades in the form of cyber cafes began mushrooming in and around the urban areas. The establishment of the cyber cafes is not a concerted government effort at promoting the use of computers. These cyber cafes are incidentally licensed as business ventures and thus, are not bound by the age limit restrictions. Today, the cyber cafes offer Internet facilities as well as popular computer games software for rental. Just like the video arcades, these adolescent haunts have now come under criticisms and observations from the general public.

Methodology

In view of the current societal transformations within the context of the various governmental policies and the changing media landscape, we embarked on a quest to explore and gauge the relationship between media penetration and cultural value orientations. The underlying assumption of this study is

that there exist a relationship between media penetration with cultural value orientations. The authors would like to note that data for the present article is part of a national survey of 2,500 sample that was administered between March to October 1999. The questionnaires were administered to five groups of young adults (Malays, Chinese, Indians, Dayaks, and Kadazans) between the ages of 13 to 25 years. The Malay, Chinese and Indians represent the three major ethnic groups in Peninsula Malaysia. The other two ethnic groups, Dayaks and Kadazans are the major ethnic groups of East Malaysia.

For this article, the analysis is of 914 adolescents between the ages of 13 to 16 years and representing the three major ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia. The ethnic breakdown for the sample is 480 Malays, 119 Chinese and 315 Indians. Effort was also made to draw random samples proportionately to represent the adolescents according to urban, suburb and rural areas.

In this study two indicators of media penetration were used as independent variables. The indicators were media environment and media use. The measurement for media penetration was based on Greenberg et. al..(1991). Indicators of cultural value orientation were sexual values, obedience to the parents, responsibility to the family, patriotism and respect for rules and laws. These indicators were derived from Condon and Yousef's value orientations (1975).

Media environment refers to the media ownership in the respondent respective home and media facilities in the township near their home. The variable was measured by asking respondent, 'Do have the following facilities in your home?' and 'Do you have the following facilities in the township near your home?' Both of these questions require dichotomous answer of *yes* and *no*.

Media use refers to the number of hours the respondents used the respective media in a week. It was measured by asking respondents, 'In a week, how much time did you spent using the following medium?' An open-ended respond was provided where respondents had to write the appropriate time spent.

The *sexual value* refers to the inclination towards a more liberal orientation towards sexual issues. The variable was assessed by asking the respondents they agreement with these statements: 'We should be afraid to befriend those infected

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with HIV/AIDS', 'Sex education should be taught in schools', 'Socializing between young male and female is a norm in today's modern world'. The reliability alpha for the items is .55.

Obedient to parents was defined in terms of accepting without question parental decision. This variable was measured by using a series of three statements, each with a four-point Likert-type scale response category. To improve the reliability, one item was dropped. The remaining two items attained an alpha reliability of .66. The two items were "I respected my parent decision even if the decision does not satisfy me" and "I must abide by regulations that has been determined by my parents at home".

To measure *responsibility towards family*, respondents were asked three closed-ended questions. The variable measures adolescents commitment to continue helping their siblings and parents even after they have had their own family. The items achieve a reliability alpha of .57. Although the alpha level is slightly low, it is still acceptable since this is an exploratory study to measure cultural identity among young adult in the country. The items were, 'I am not obliged to help my family since I have my own life to take care of', 'I am willing to have my parents stay with me' and 'Going back the village to visit my parent is an outdated ritual'.

Level of *patriotism* was measured by using three items: 'I am willing to defend my country if attacked by foreign forces', 'I am willing to protest if foreigners criticized my country' and 'Given an opportunity, I am willing to migrate to other countries'. With one item deleted, the three items secured a reliability alpha of .59. The variables measures the extend of one's love and readiness to defend the country.

The other variable is *respect for rules and laws*, a measure of one's willingness to follow the rules and laws of the country. The reliability alpha is based on three items. The items are 'Youth at the age of 21 should be made compulsory to vote', 'Censorship board should censor sexual scene in films', and 'Demonstration is the best way to express grievances against the government'. The alpha level is .75.

Findings

The various efforts undertaken by the government to narrow the socio-economic gap between the major ethnic groups has

somewhat influenced our data analysis. It is important to analyze the data according to the major ethnic groups because media ownership can be used as an indicator of their well being as well as the influence it has on cultural value and identity.

Data in Table 1 indicates that more than 98 percent of the adolescents owned at least a television set in their home. The ownership is high across ethnic groups as well as across location of residence. It is not uncommon to find more than one television set in a Malaysian home. This high ownership of television across ethnic groups and location of residence is attributed to the affordable price of television sets as well as the clear reception enjoyed in most parts of the country.

TABLE 1.
Media
Environment
(Percentage of
Ownership/
Accessibility)

	Urban	Suburbs	Rural	Total
<i>Ethnic Malay</i>				
Terrestrial TV	99	96	97	98
Satellite TV	5	5	3	4
Radio	97	93	98	97
Newspaper	97	93	98	97
Personal Computer*	35	27	10	25
Cybercafe**	57	39	5	36
<i>Ethnic Chinese</i>				
Terrestrial TV	100	100	100	100
Satellite TV	18	7	11	13
Radio	97	100	96	97
Newspaper	97	98	97	97
Personal Computer**	54	41	15	42
Cybercafe**	63	77	0	46
<i>Ethnic Indian</i>				
Terrestrial TV	100	100	97	99
Satellite TV*	24	7	5	11
Radio	99	96	99	98
Newspaper	98	100	97	98
Personal Computer**	48	21	12	26
Cybercafe**	47	12	14	24

* sig. at .05

** sig. at .01 for the Chi Square test across urban, suburbs and rural residence.

Cable and satellite television stations which made it debut in Malaysia in 1997 is accessed by a small fraction of the sample. About 13 percent of the Chinese and 11 percent of the Indians adolescents have access to the services. However the accessibility by the Malays is lower, at 4 percent only. The higher percentage of satellite ownership by the Chinese and Indian adolescents could possibly due to the attraction of special Chinese and Indian Channels besides those that offers western programmes. The Malay families could be contented with the variety of Malay language programmes offered by the local terrestrial television.

Ownership and accessibility to radio programmes matched that of terrestrial television. More than 97 percent of the Malay adolescents owned radio sets. The Chinese and Indians ownership is about 97 per cent and 98 percent respectively. Just like the television ownership, there is a multiple radio ownership.

The other mass media that could match the ownership of television and radio sets is the newspaper. The Malaysian adolescents are also fortunate to have access to newspapers due to their high literacy rate. The Indian samples have the edge with 99 percents accessibility to newspaper on a daily basis. The Malays and Chinese have an accessibility rate of 97 percent.

The above data clearly show the Malaysian adolescents enjoy a media rich environment. Ownership and accessibility to television, radio and newspapers is regarded more as a necessity rather than a luxury in many Malaysian homes. Most of the respondents were raised in that media rich environment considering that the Malaysian media industry has undergone rapid development as of the middle of the 1980's.

In recent years, Malaysians have joined the computer technology bandwagon. Due to the high costs of personal computers, ownership is still low. The Chinese adolescents show the highest ownership (42 percent) as compared to their Indian (26 percent) and Malay (25 percent) counterparts.

To complement the accessibility to personal computers at homes, Malaysian adolescents frequent cyber cafes, a public space that offers personal computer facilities for a nominal fees. Again the Chinese adolescents indicate higher access to cyber cafes (52 percent) compared to 36 percent access among

the Malay adolescents and 24 percent among the Indian adolescents. Ownership of personal computers and accessibility to cyber cafes are higher in urban areas as compared to the rural areas.

Media use

Media use is operationalized as the number of hours spent with a media per week. The Malay adolescents (mean 20.1 hours) seems to spent more time watching television programs compared to the Chinese (mean 17.3 hours) and the Indians (mean 14.6 hours). One possible reasons is that many of the prime time programs are in the national language, which is a Malay language. Malay adolescents have a wider choice of programs as compared to the Chinese and the Indians. Although the Malaysian adolescents have a good command of the national language, the Malay themes in the Malay local programs fail to attract their interests.

With regard to the location of residence, the Malay and Chinese adolescents in rural areas significantly spend more time watching television than the urban adolescents. The rural Malay and Chinese adolescents spend about 23.7 and 27.3 hours per week respectively to watch television. Their urban counterparts, that is the Malays watched an average of 19.5 hours of television per week. The Chinese figure is about 13.6 hours. Although there is no statistically significant difference between urban and rural Indian adolescents, the average viewing of television is relatively high.

As for radio, there is a significant difference between rural and urban listening especially among the Malay and Chinese adolescents. Among the Malays, the rural adolescents (mean 18.1) spend more hours listening to radio than the urban adolescent (mean 13.0). On the other hand, among the Indians, the urban adolescents (mean 18.4) significantly spend more time listening to radio than the rural adolescents (mean 14.2).

While the adolescents have almost equal access to television, radio and newspaper, they only spend about half of their time spent on listening to radio or viewing television programs to reading newspapers. Among the three ethnic groups, there is a significant different in the duration of time spend reading newspapers among the rural and urban

adolescents. The rural Malay (mean 11.1) and Chinese (mean 8.9) adolescents spent more time reading newspapers than their urban counterparts. The urban Malay spend about 5.9 hours per week reading newspaper as compared to the urban Chinese with a mean of 6.7 hours per week. The Indian adolescents show a different trend whereas the urban adolescents spend 6.6 hours per week as compared to the rural adolescents who spend about 5.5 hours per week reading newspapers.

	Urban	Suburbs	Rural	Total	F
<i>Ethnic Malay</i>					
Terrestrial TV*	19.5	18.4	23.7	20.1	4.73
Sattelite TV	9.5	10.1	9.3	9.6	0.32
Radio*	13.0	15.1	18.1	15.0	3.87
Newspapers**	5.9	7.2	11.1	7.6	8.97
e-mail**	2.5	1.7	0.9	1.8	4.98
Websites**	2.5	1.8	1.0	1.9	4.33
Other software	4.4	3.5	2.6	3.7	1.44
<i>Ethnic Chinese</i>					
Terrestrial TV**	13.6	18.4	27.7	17.3	13.61
Satellite TV	14.0	16.1	30.4	16.2	2.84
Radio	15.0	14.1	14.6	14.6	.11
Newspapers*	6.7	5.3	8.9	6.5	6.24
e-mail*	2.9	1.3	0.1	2.0	7.34
Websites*	2.8	1.3	0.2	1.9	7.51
Other software*	2.9	1.3	0.1	2.0	8.06
<i>Ethnic Indian</i>					
Terrestrial TV	15.6	13.9	13.9	14.6	0.64
Satellite TV	7.3	7.8	4.3	7.0	0.64
Radio**	18.4	10.0	12.8	14.2	10.7
Newspapers*	6.6	4.3	5.5	5.6	3.39
e-mail	2.2	1.0	0.9	1.5	2.53
Websites*	2.0	0.8	1.1	1.4	4.11
Other software	1.9	1.3	0.9	1.4	0.84

TABLE 2.
Media Use
(Mean Hours
Per Week)

As was mentioned earlier the access to personal computers is still low. Nonetheless, the time that the adolescents spend with the computers are exceptionally high.

The Malay adolescents spend an average of 7.4 hours per week at the keyboards in comparison to the Chinese (mean 5.9 hours) and the Indians (mean 4.3 hours). The main bulk of the time is used to surf the web sites, e mailing, games and other uses.

The personal computers with its multi-media facilities have attracted more urban adolescents to spend their time e-mailing and surfing the web sites. The urban Malay adolescents spend an average of 2.5 hours per week e-mailing as compared to the rural Malay adolescents (mean 0.9). There is also a significant difference among the rural (mean 0.1) and urban (mean 2.9) Chinese adolescents in duration of the time on e-mailing. Among the Indians, although the urban data indicate more time e-mailing than their rural counterparts, the difference is not statistically significant. The data in Table 2 also indicate that there is a significant difference between the urban and rural adolescents across ethnic groups with regards to using the Internet surfing the web sites.

Value orientations

As the Malaysian society evolves from an agrarian to an industrialized society, it is expected that the individual value orientation will undergo a gradual change. According to Inglehart (1990) when society and its structure change, the individual's values and skills will change accordingly. As it is, this study focuses on five value orientations namely values on sexuality, obedient to parents, responsibility towards family, patriotism, and respect for rules and laws. Data in Table 4 indicate that there is a significant difference in value orientations between the three ethnic groups.

With regard to value on sexuality, the Chinese adolescents (mean 10.63) seem to have a more liberal value than the Indians (mean 9.21) and the Malays (mean 8.25). These adolescents indicate that they want freedom in the interactions between the opposite sex, willing to accept the gay groups as part of the society, and are agreeable that sex education be taught in schools.

As for the traditional family values of being obedient to one's parents, the Malay (mean 9.03) and Indians (mean 9.10) adolescents show that these two groups adhere that value stronger than the Chinese adolescents (mean 8.37). They are

willing to obey their parents' decisions without many questions, follow rules set by their parents and do not regard their parents' advice as outdated. Closely related to this value is responsibility towards the family. The Malay adolescents (mean 10.71) lead the way in this traditional family responsibility. They are more willing to take the old parents to stay in their homes, assist their siblings and make frequent visits to their parents' homes in the villages.

Value	Malay		Chinese		Indian	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Sexuality**	8.25	2.0	10.63	2.2	9.21	2.9
Obedient*	9.03	1.5	8.37	1.6	9.10	1.6
Responsibility**	10.71	1.2	10.12	1.4	10.64	1.4
Patriotic**	5.70	.52	5.40	.56	5.40	.67
Rules & Law**	10.19	1.4	9.13	1.9	8.92	1.9

* significant at .05

** significant at .01 based on one-way ANOVA

TABLE 3.
Value
orientations
between
ethnic groups

The other value orientations are those related to patriotism and respect for rules and laws. The Malay adolescents (mean 5.7) show a slightly higher patriotism orientation compared to the Chinese and Indian adolescents with their mean score of 5.4. Most of them feel compelled to protest against persons attempting to discredit the country, ever willing to defend the country against outside aggression, and not likely to migrate to foreign countries.

As for respect for rules and laws, again the Malay adolescents (mean 10.19) showed a higher level for respect for rules and laws. The mean for the Chinese and Indian adolescents are 9.13 and 8.92 respectively. These adolescents agree with the decision to make it compulsory for individuals at the age of 21 to vote, allow the censorship board to censor sexual scenes in films, and punish heavily those involved in corruption.

Media Use and Value Orientations

Our subsequent analysis is to determine the possible correlation between media use and value orientations. In

developing countries, media in particular television has always been blamed as the socialization agent that brings negative influences especially on the adolescents. In Malaysia, the same concern is raised with the introduction of satellite television and the increasing popularity of entertainment oriented computer software among the adolescents.

Our data indicate that these concerns are in fact not baseless. However, we must be cautious in interpreting the data. There is no doubt that there is a correlation between media use especially that of satellite television, surfing the websites and using e-mail and chat lines with value orientations. The data in table 4 indicate that even though there is a significant correlation, it is low. What it means is that while media use could be a socializing agent in terms of value orientations, there are other major agents involved that is not determined in this study.

TABLE 4.
Correlation
between
media use
and value
orientations

	Terristrial	Satellitite	Radio	News	Websites	e-mail
<i>Ethnic Malay</i>						
Sexuality	.02	.19**	-.07	-.08	.17**	.19**
Obedient	-.04	.01	-.09	.01	-.08	-.05
Responsibility	.04	.00	-.01	-.02	.00	.04
Patriotic	.02	.188	.02	.06	.03	.01
Rules &Law	.03	-.04	.01	.02	-.08	-.11*
<i>Ethnic Chinese</i>						
Sexuality	.06	.08	.05	-.07	.17*	.27**
Obedient	.12	-.01	-.06	-.03	.04	.05
Responsibility	.02	.13*	.05	.04	.07	.04
Patriotic	.01	.12	.01	.04	.13*	.15*
Rules &Law	-.07	.02	.01	-.09	-.06	.08
<i>Ethnic Indian</i>						
Sexuality	.02	.19*	-.02	-.05	.21**	.18**
Obedient	-.02	.06	.09	.10	.01	-.03
Responsibility	-.02	-.04	-.11	-.06	-.01	-.04
Patriotic	.03	.06	-.01	.04	.06	.02
Rules &Law	.06	-.07	.09	.07	.02	.08

* sig. at .05 **sig. at .01

As it is, the use of satellite television significantly correlates with liberal views on sexuality among the Malay and Indian adolescents. Among the Malays, the use of satellite television also significantly correlates with patriotism. The Chinese adolescents who have the highest use of satellite television show an influence in their views on the sense of responsibility towards their family.

The Malaysian society is also concerned with the high and limitless access of the present generation of adolescents to uncensored information. There are on-going debates as to the possible negative influences of surfing computer web sites on the moral values of the adolescents. The present study indicates that such concerns are not unwarranted. Across all the three ethnic groups, access to computers whether it is to the web sites or e-mailing and chatting results in more liberal sexual values. As was indicated earlier even though the correlations are significant but they are low. While the society's concerns are valid, they should not press the panic button as yet!

Other than its influence on liberal views of sexuality, the accessibility and use of computer facilities in some way reinforces significantly the sense of patriotism among the Chinese adolescents. One other influence of the use of computer facility is the significant correlation between e-mailing and the use of chat lines with the respect of rules and laws among the Malay adolescents. The negative and significant correlation indicates that higher use of e-mailing and chat lines significantly contributes to less respect for rules and laws among the Malay adolescents. Among the Chinese and Indians, the correlation are positive but not significant. It is worth noting that during the period of this study, there are considerable web sites in Malay language that were critical of the government.

One rather obvious fact from this study is the non-existence of significant correlation between the 'traditional' mass media such as terrestrial television, radio and newspapers with the value orientations. At least in Malaysia, societal concerns has now shifted to the new media and as to what influences they will bring to the adolescents. While it is inappropriate to resist the new media, the question is how does one embrace the new media without sacrificing one's traditional values and cultural identity.

Discussions and Conclusion

The emergence of the new communication technology especially the personal computers have revolutionized and challenged the traditional use of the mass media. The multi-media dimension of personal computers have incorporated the function of newspapers, radio and television into one medium. If not for the high price of personal computers and availability of its networking, the multi-media computers would have taken up a lot more of the adolescents free time. In Malaysia, with several incentives from the government such as income tax rebate on the purchase of personal computers, withdrawal of pension fund to buy computers, and interest free loan for government employees to buy computers, it is predicted that the usage of computers among adolescents will be on the rise. The present study indicates that an average of 30 percent of the adolescents owned a personal computer at home.

Although the accessibility and availability of personal computers among the adolescents are relatively low, the time taken by them to interact with the computers have somewhat caught up with time spent for reading newspapers. Even under those circumstances, the time spend watching television program and listening to the radios are still high. Perhaps, in the near future it will have a significant effect on the time adolescents spend listening to radio and viewing television programs.

In spite of the higher time spend with the mass media such as radio, television and newspapers, in its present situation, there is no indication of any significant influence on the adolescents value orientations. Instead, the media that show significant correlation with some of the value orientations (such as sexual values and patriotism) are satellite television and personal computers.

Admittedly, the data indicate that the dominant role and influence of the mass media especially that of television in the life of the adolescents could be assumed to be on the decline. Slowly and surely, in many Malaysian homes, the personal computers are getting the central attention that used to be given to television from the 1960s to the 1980s. Television that used to be dubbed as the 'window to the world' is in fact being replaced by the Internet as a vehicle to discover knowledge, seek entertainment, and interacting with others across their personal space. However, in societies where the

new computer technology has not made a significant inroad, the everyday life of the adolescents could still be centered on the television.

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